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OUTLINE OF AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
for
REA FINANCED SYSTEMS

An educational program such as is outlined here should be pointed toward and result in these definite objectives:

1. A membership informed concerning cooperative principles and their application to the affairs of the local REA cooperative.
2. Getting every farm family in the area served -- as member of the cooperative and an informed user of its services.
3. Increased consumption of current, stressing income producing uses.
4. Understanding of the Economic and Social advantages of the REA Cooperative to the community by all groups in the area served.
5. An integration of REA Cooperative activities with those of all other agencies, both Government and local.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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LAND OFFICE

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

FROM THE COMMISSIONER OF THE LAND OFFICE

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GENERAL ASPECTS

The Federal Government, through REA, has up to September, 1939, loaned a total of 250 million dollars for building rural electric distribution lines. This has been done since the REA was established in 1935.

One of the provisions of that Act provides "That the Administrator, in making such loans, shall give preference to States, Territories, and sub-divisions and agencies thereof, municipalities, peoples utility districts, and cooperative, non-profit, or limited dividend associations, which comply with the requirements of this Act." Loans may also be made to private utilities.

About 95% of all loans have been made to farmers' cooperatives organized for the purpose of serving themselves with electricity. In view of that fact, it is advisable that members of these cooperatives should know something of the history, principles, achievements and technique of cooperation, so that they can apply that knowledge to insure the successful conduct of their own cooperative enterprise.

It is also advisable that REA Cooperative members should understand better, the nation-wide REA program. The benefits, both economic and social, that will follow the wide, efficient, and intelligent use of electric current in rural communities must be more fully realized.

The effective development of an REA System depends on the widest knowledge of its possible benefits to the individual members, and to the community at large. It requires active participation and acceptance of responsibility on the part of every consumer of the System.

Building community support for a System should be among the first steps taken by it in an educational program.

The benefits to the System are:

1. Widespread and active community support creates a friendly atmosphere, making it easier to get rights-of-way, to sign up potential consumers, and to carry on an effective utilization program.
2. It makes it more difficult for unfriendly private utilities or public officials to undermine and harm the System.
3. It focuses the attention of the community on the affairs of the System, thus encouraging conscientious service on the part of the board and the employees.
4. It opens the use of many community facilities to the System (meeting halls, local press, schools, churches, clubs, etc. for spreading information).

The benefits to the community are:

1. A successful REA System helps the farmer to cut operating costs.
2. It helps him to get a higher cash income.

3. It increases farm values.
4. It builds up community ownership of the electric System, instead of paying toll to absentee stockholders.
5. The result of 1, 2, 3 and 4, above, is to bring and keep more money in the community, thus making possible, higher local living standards, and helping local business.
6. Availability of electrical service stimulates rural industries and offers increased local employment.
7. It permits a more extensive use of the recreational cultural facilities of the community (electric lights in meeting halls, churches, schools, etc.).
8. It results in improved rural sanitation and better health.
9. It offers better use of educational facilities, by making electric power available to rural schools.
10. It lessens the drudgery of farm life and gives farm families more leisure for cultural pursuits, and for participating in community activities.
11. The success of an REA System rests on the practical application of the spirit of mutual self-help. Once this spirit is developed and applied to rural electrification, it will make itself felt beneficially in dealing with other community problems.
12. Practical cooperative functioning in an economic enterprise is practical training in Democracy. The best way to save Democracy is to use it. Co-operators do just that. Good cooperators are good citizens because they have learned to apply the principles of Democracy in their daily lives.

Utilizing National, State and Local Agencies

A program for developing community support should begin with a survey of organizations and groups active in the area to be served. Records should be kept on a card file. The card should contain this information:

1. Name of organization.
2. Officers, with address and telephone number of each.
3. Dates of regular meetings.
4. Meeting place.
5. Program committee.
6. Program.
7. Outstanding leadership noted.

Such a list of organized groups would include:

1. Agricultural Extension Service.

2. Grammar and high schools. All one-room and consolidated schools.
See also Public Schools, below.
3. Public libraries.
4. Churches.
5. Farm organizations.
6. Men's and women's clubs, including Parent-Teachers' Associations.
7. 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America and other youth organizations.
8. Daily and weekly newspapers.
9. Radio.
10. Forums, town or county.

How to make the program effective:

A survey should be made of people able and available to speak before groups on one or many of the phases of rural electrification. Their name, address, telephone number and special qualifications should be listed. Such a list should, to start with, include the names of rural electrification specialists of the Extension Division, County Agents, Home Demonstration Agents, System superintendents, and any or all members of the board of trustees. Clergymen have in some instances been the prime movers in starting an REA System. Frequently some teacher or club leader has taken an active part in such development. All such people who can and will, should be asked to serve their community further.

As information spreads and new people become interested, the list of speakers should grow automatically. Such people should be well informed on the subject they are given to speak on. They should also be apprised of the progress and any new development of the local REA System and the national program. This should be done through the local office.

Request time to tell the story of the REA national program, and the local REA System to each group in area served or to be served, with a second or third story to follow as the System develops. Suggested subjects to be covered are:

1. Story of national REA program.
2. Story of home and farm uses of electricity.
3. Story of local REA System.
4. Story of economic and social benefits of program.
5. The work one KWH will do for you.
6. Why the modern farmer wants electricity, the modern tool.

Public Schools

The public school is a fertile field in which to carry on an educational program on rural electrification. The rural school is, or should be, a vital factor in the development of the rural community. It offers a direct route into practically every farm home.

1. One of the most effective approaches to the adults of the community is through the schools which their children attend.

2. The farm youth need to know the value and importance of the electric lines they will fall heir to in the course of a few years.
3. The contribution they can make to the System through varied school activities is very great.
4. Knowledge of various phases of rural electrification is necessary in order to change school curricula to meet the needs of today's youth.
5. Training in vocational classes in the field of electricity will open new avenues of employment to rural young people.

How to advance an educational program in the schools:

1. List names of all county school superintendents, and for each county, list all schools in your System's area, with the names of principals, and number of pupils in attendance, at each school. Names of all agricultural vocational and Domestic Science teachers should be added.
 - a. Send a letter to the principal giving a brief history of the System.
 - b. If the school can be served by an REA System, offer help in planning for wiring, lighting, power uses, etc.
 - c. Solicit aid of principal and staff, as well as of pupils.
 - d. List Parent-Teachers' Association officers and leaders for each school district. Send literature for distribution to and discussion by pupils and teachers and PTA leaders.
 - e. Ask permission to have some speaker address the entire school at assembly period on REA cooperative system.
2. From that point get school cooperation through:
 - a. Debates
 - b. Forum
 - c. Current events classes
 - d. History
 - e. Public speaking is also a feature of present day school work. This offers splendid opportunity to choose a theme connected with local REA System and treat it from many angles.
 - f. Essays (Suggested topics:
 - (1) What electricity can do for my farm.
 - (2) What work a KWH of electricity will do for you.
 - (3) Can electricity increase the income of our farms?
 - (4) Cooperative electricity - where and why it started.)(There are many other themes that can be chosen covering the subject.)
 - g. Contests of many kinds can be developed in the schools. These can be carried on as community, county or statewide school projects. The Themes for such contests should center around the national REA program, electric power and its uses on the farm, in the home, rural electrification and cooperation. The subjects lend themselves to many variations.
 - h. Exhibits of:
 - (1) Good wiring
 - (2) Good lighting
 - (3) Good photographs of system or from REA.

- (4) Posters and charts from:
 - (a) REA
 - (b) Various manufacturers
- (5) Small farm equipment demonstrated by vocational boys.
- (6) Electric cookery demonstrated by Domestic Science class.

3. Entertainment:

a. Pageants:

- (1) Of light
- (2) Brides of 1839, 1900, 1939.
- (3) Development of Power
 - (a) Wind
 - (b) Steam
 - (c) Gasoline
 - (d) Electricity
- (4) Farm life, yesterday, today and tomorrow.

b. Plays:

These are suggestions and offer many variations--themes on electricity and cooperation. There are many available. The Utilization Division has a portfolio thereon.

c. Other entertainment:

Entertainment is a part of school activity. There is difficulty in finding new features. School evening entertainments can be built around the local REA System, film strips shown, and cooperative songs and playlets by boys and girls. REA has a list of plays and pageants covering rural electrification and cooperation.

- (1) Father and son evening (Sons entertaining fathers)
Theme: Electricity - history, value, uses.
- (2) Mother and Daughter afternoon (Daughters entertaining mothers)
- (3) Major Bowes Hour--can be worked up by school talent into good entertainment, covering national REA program, and what it can do for agriculture and cooperation.
- (4) "Information Please" lends itself admirably to getting the story of cooperative electrification over.

Classes from public schools served by the System should be invited to its office when facilities are adequate to meet the System superintendent, his staff, and the board of directors. Provision should be made for an informal ceremony and entertainment on demonstration of equipment. Classes in vocational agriculture and domestic science should have special consideration. ~~Graded~~ groups also should receive some attention. School buses should be made available for transportation to the System's office. This should be made a social as well as an educational opportunity to establish intelligent community relations.

Developing and Retaining Community Support

Get your community acquainted with the REA program, and with the problems and objectives of your local REA System. Show how it can participate in helping to establish rural electrification firmly and successfully as an important asset to the community. Establish regular contacts with each group or agency.

Methods for developing and retaining community support:

1. Provide written or printed information regarding REA and your local System. A recent publication issued by REA entitled "A Guide for Members of REA Cooperatives," will be found very helpful.
2. Provide speakers at meetings of the various institutions and organizations who can explain the program and its significance to the community.
3. Draw community and group leaders into special committees of your System on cooperative education, safety, utilization, publicity, etc. See Special Committees.
4. Help the schools to organize debates, essay contests, etc., on rural electrification. Encourage practical projects in making and applying electrical equipment.
5. Supply the local press with interesting material for a regular column or corner.
6. Arrange for local radio broadcasts which should be both informative and entertaining.
7. Organize neighborhood study clubs on cooperation and on the use of electricity in the home and on the farm.
8. Arrange to have county forums use rural electrification for discussion and study.
9. Arrange demonstrations of electric appliances and equipment, not only in connection with large meetings, but also in small neighborhood groups. Domestic Science classes should be called on to demonstrate the use of electric kitchen equipment.
10. Encourage your System and its members to participate actively in all efforts to improve the economic and cultural life of the community.

Other methods of presentation:

1. Demonstration of uses of electricity in schools, churches, clubs, etc., by educational director and group leaders.
2. Show film strips.
3. Entertainment features:
 - a. Pageant
 - b. Playlets.

It is important that you do not permit the following:

1. Do not allow your System to become a political football to be kicked around.
2. Do not permit any individual or special group to dominate your System no matter how able the individual or group may be.

Educational Committees, Central and Local:

A community will respond more readily, and participate more fully in an educational program, when local people shape its policy and plans. Therefore, a central committee should be set up to formulate a policy and make plans for a program of education suitable for the area to be served. The majority of this central committee and the chairman should be System members. It should also include other people in the area who have worked for the development of the System. For the suggested composition of these committees, see Educational Committee.

In order to develop interest and leadership among System members, opportunities should be developed for them, and they should be urged to participate in an educational program, in every possible way.

Remember that you hold the key position as superintendent of an REA System, in an enterprise that is part of the greatest program ever inaugurated for bringing the electrical benefits of our modern civilization to rural America.

The history of successful Cooperatives is a history of applied idealism and sound management. The visionary blazed the trail. The followers made the clearing on which to build. The scientist provided the tools. You, the practical manager of a rural electrification System, have the responsibility for getting the job completed and put to effective use. This requires an open mind, vision, a capacity for hard work, ability to learn from experience, and a cooperative attitude at all times.

USE OF RADIO

Local radio stations should be asked to serve their listeners by giving time to REA Systems. This is one of the best and easiest approaches to rural people. This request may come from some group rendering community service which is already receiving free time from the station, or directly from a committee of the System.

Basis of Approach to Local Station:

1. Free program service (no cost to station).
2. Inducement to dealers to advertise.
3. Definite local interest (audience builder).
4. Community service (creates good will).
5. Station's civic duty to carry an educational program.

How schools can help on radio programs:

The U. S. Office of Education can help generally. It has a Script Exchange and program series. Material can be secured from them free of charge, upon request. The State Colleges teach experimental use of radio.

High Schools, 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America and Vocational Schools can prepare programs.

1. Announce an essay contest and a radio reading of the winning essays.
2. Prepare debates carefully on subjects relating to the REA cooperative program.

3. Present playlets with a special message.
4. Explain special appliances, their uses and possibilities in benefits. Combine with entertainment features, such as music.

Getting radio time on other programs:

Get in on programs of farm organizations and men's and women's clubs. These may be:

1. Straight talks
2. Interviews
3. Short announcements of the progress of your System.

Selection of Radio Speakers:

They should include System superintendents, directors, county agent, community leaders, members with profitable experiences, an entire family, and students. Youths should serve as speakers as often as possible.

Radio points to remember:

1. Be sure you have an interesting idea and the correct facts.
2. Play up local persons.
3. Keep programs short, but snappy.
4. Treat subjects from the farmer's viewpoint.
5. Use the press to announce radio programs.

Radio subjects can deal with:

1. The national significance of rural electrification.
2. The meaning of rural electrification to your local community.
3. The meaning of rural electrification to the farmer, farm woman, farm boy, and farm girl.
4. Specific uses and benefits of rural electrification.
5. Progress reports on line construction, energization, load building, new development of your System.
6. Annual and special meetings of your System.

In all of these talks, the cooperative features should be emphasized. The System superintendent should make an effort to draw into the radio program as many interested people as possible, from among the youth and adult groups.

The Participation of Women in the Program

The participation of women in the affairs of REA Systems has proved useful from many standpoints. The first step to make such participation possible is a provision in the bylaws giving women a joint membership with their husbands. This opens the way to the election of women to the board of directors or trustees which, in many instances, would come as a recognition of services already performed for the System or the community.

The interest of women in developing an educational program should be enlisted at the start. Women should be asked to serve on every committee and should be given an active part in carrying forward every phase of such work. Their interest in electricity, knowing something of what it may mean as a tool to lighten their own burdens, gives point and enthusiasm to the service they can render their System and community.

In the majority of communities, women are already organized in groups serving many purposes. Chief among these are the Home Demonstration Clubs under the supervision of Extension Directors. In this group alone there are 1,104,490 adult farm women organized into 47,010 Home Demonstration Clubs. There are also the farm organizations in which women have taken an active, intelligent part. For many years they have been organized to serve their schools and communities.

In enlisting the services of farm women in this program a System superintendent or educational director is merely making use of local people who have had organization experience. In most localities they have available, groups already organized and to whom they can take the REA educational program.

Thousands of farm women have experience in the field of organization and education. They have a growing knowledge, and an intelligent economic and social interest in the rural problems confronting them and their children. Many REA Systems were given their initial start by the hard work and farsightedness of women. A recognition of those services would serve the best interests of a System.

The interest of women in the movement is not only in the fact that it is a movement for the advancement of women, but also in the fact that it is a movement for the advancement of the whole race. It is a movement for the advancement of the whole race, and it is a movement for the advancement of the whole race.

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